

GLOBAL WOMAN LEADER

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WOMAN LEADER *Top 10*
GLOBAL WOMEN
LEADERS FROM GCC 2023

GLOBAL
WOMAN LEADER

Proudly awards

Nathalie Abou Jaoude

Managing Partner,
ABENSAL LIGHTING

The recognition of Top 10 Global Women Leaders from GCC- 2023 acknowledges the vast industry experience and subject matter expertise of the chosen women leaders while also celebrating their inspirational professional journey in the GCC business landscape.

Rachita

Rachita Sharma
Managing Editor

NATHALIE ABOU JAOUDE

MASTERING LIGHT, ENCHANTING SPACES



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WITH THE GROWING DEMAND FOR INNOVATIVE LIGHTING SOLUTIONS, THE INTERSECTION OF INTERIOR DESIGN AND LIGHTING DESIGN OFFERS ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES FOR CREATIVE & FUNCTIONAL INTERIOR SPACES

NATHALIE ABOU JAOUDE MANAGING PARTNER

Nathalie Abou Jaoude is an accomplished business leader, renowned for her specialization in innovative lighting solutions. With a career marked by creativity and excellence, she brings fresh perspectives and unmatched vision to every project.

Interior design and lighting are the new trends and integral components of creating aesthetically pleasing and functional spaces. Lighting not only illuminates spaces but also adds an artistic and functional dimension to interior design, making it an essential element in creating inviting and visually appealing environments. With the growing demand for innovative lighting solutions, the intersection of interior design and lighting design offers endless possibilities for creative and functional interior spaces, resulting in a thriving and dynamic field.

This brings us to Nathalie Abou Jaoude, Managing Partner of Abensal Lighting, a distinguished figure in the industry who possesses a wealth of experience and expertise in interior design, with a specialization in lighting design. Her keen understanding of how lighting impacts spaces and emotions infuses creativity and functionality into every project. Over the years, her appreciation for the interplay between lighting and interior design has grown, allowing her to approach each project with fresh perspectives, making her a sought-after expert in her field.

Share early life influences that shaped you.

Growing up in Lebanon during the civil war influenced

my personal development and decision-making process. Constant uncertainty and adversity cultivated resilience and adaptability in me.

Originally, I aspired to become a lawyer, but circumstances led me to pursue interior design studies.

My family served as a cornerstone of support and inspiration, exposing me to the arts from a young age. I learned to play the piano, danced ballet, and listened to classical music, nurturing a deep appreciation for beauty and artistry. Attending a French school further enriched my formative years, providing a robust educational foundation and the opportunity to forge lasting friendships. Exposure to diverse languages and cultures expanded my horizons, and I've since achieved fluency in five languages, enhancing my global perspective and communication skills.

Share your industry experience and key expertise in interior design leadership.

After graduating, my interior design journey began with a challenging hotel project that ignited my passion for hospitality-focused design. A turning point came early in my career when I worked on a transformative lighting showroom project, revealing a new realm of creativity.

This fascination led me to specialize in lighting design, deepening my understanding of its impact on spaces and emotions.

Reflecting on my journey, these diverse experiences have been instrumental in shaping my career, driving my passion, and inspiring me to push design boundaries. Over the years, my appreciation for the interplay between lighting and interior design has grown, allowing me to approach each project with fresh perspectives.

Tell us about Abensal Lighting and your growth strategy for the company?

Established 33 years ago, Abensal Lighting is dedicated to serving customers, employees, and stakeholders. Our enduring vision includes fostering innovation, offering high-quality products at competitive prices, and maintaining transparency and authenticity, and this sets us apart from competitors and builds a strong reputation for excellence. We aim to create a positive impact on society and the environment. Currently, we're expanding with a new branch in Saudi Arabia, actively managing numerous projects there, extending from our UAE and Qatar offices. Our mission and focus on key differentiators positions us for success in the competitive lighting industry.

What are your industry challenges & strategies for overcoming them?

During my three decades managing Abensal, we faced several significant challenges. The lighting industry's constant evolution, driven by advancements in LED and smart lighting technologies, required us to stay current by investing in research and development, fostering innovation within the organization, and maintaining strong relationships with technology providers. Additionally, we navigated intense global competition by concentrating on building a robust brand, offering unique value propositions, and enhancing the client experience with exceptional service. We also expanded our reach through international partnerships and alliances. Lastly, educating customers about the benefits of our lighting products and how they could meet their specific needs proved challenging, nonetheless at Abensal, we addressed this by providing outstanding customer support to guide them through their lighting choices.

What are your most significant professional achievements?

Among the noteworthy 'wins,' I include our first hospitality project, The Address Hotel Dubai Mall, where

we supplied bespoke lighting products. Following that, we took on the challenge of providing highly intricate bespoke fixtures for prestigious establishments like the Bvlgari Hotel. Over the years, our custom lighting solutions have been successfully delivered to numerous high-profile hospitality and prestigious projects in the UAE, Qatar, and KSA. Notably, we were honored to contribute our expertise to the Royal Pavilion for Expo 2020 during the challenging times of Covid. So far, we've been honored with multiple awards and recognitions, including 'Company of the Year' by The Gulf Entrepreneur in 2023 and a nomination to the Lighting Powerlist 2023 by Design Middle East.

How do you stay aligned with global lighting industry changes?

Exploring new markets, such as KSA and the GCC, opens doors to untapped demand and opportunities for scalability and profitability. To improve operational efficiency, we must streamline processes, reduce costs, and enhance supply chain management. Sustainability takes center stage as environmentally conscious consumers seek eco-friendly practices from companies. Embracing digital technologies such as IoT, AI, and cloud computing can transform our products and services, opening new growth prospects.

What defines you as a leader? What would your advice be women leaders/entrepreneurs?

As a leader, my commitment to excellence is unwavering, while I uphold high expectations for my team without subjecting them to undue pressure. I promote both mental and physical health by conducting yoga classes, holding a certification as a yoga teacher. Our company's core values include Loyalty, Commitment, Respect, Honesty, Leadership, and Unity, and I consistently reinforce these values among team members. I firmly believe that individuals thrive when motivated to excel and genuinely feel appreciated, all while maintaining elevated work standards. In the words of Vince Lombardi, 'The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.'

Acknowledging the immense potential within each of the women, I want to emphasize that your dreams, ambitions, and determination have the power to reshape industries, communities, and the world itself. Your journey isn't solely about personal success; it's also about breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations of women. **GWL**